AN ANSWER TO A LETTER FROM Dr. BRAY,

Directed to such as have contributed towards the Propagating

Christian Knowledge IN THE PLANTATIONS.

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BRITISH MUSEUM

AN ANSWER TO A LETTER From Dr. *BRAY*.

BEing one of those who are heartily Desirous that *Christian Knowledge* be propagated in the *Plantations*, and have in my small Proportion, contributed thereto; I suppose my self to come within the compass of the Doctor's Direction, and as such, have some kind of Right to Read and Consider his Letter, and also to Reply to it, upon finding him either *Mistaken* or *Partial*; and I cannot avoid thinking he is both. *Partial*, in attempting to break the common Liberty of the People of *Maryland*, for the private Advantage of a few Clergy-men: *Mistaken*, not only in calling his Attempt by the glorious Title of *Promoting Christian Knowledge*, but also, in the Way and Means to effect it; and therefore have given my self the trouble of the following Papers, to contribute yet farther, if it may be, to undeceive any who may be misled by the Doctor's *Letter*, which I shall consider chiefly under two General Heads.

First, *With respect to the* Design.

Secondly, *The Method he has proposed to carry on and effect the* Design.

First, The *Design* it self; The Doctor, p. 1. and in his first Paragraph, says, it *is the Destruction of the Powers of Darkness, and the Enlargement of Christ's Kingdom in his Majesty's Plantations.*

This *Design*, when real, and not pretended only, is a *Design* so Noble, Just and Honourable, that it is worthy the hearty Encouragement of all Faithful Christians; and all such cannot but think themselves engaged to Contribute, according to their several Capacities, for the effecting of it; because, that in the Progress of this Work, it makes *Governours* and *Government* Secure and Easie; it makes *Families* Sober and Industrious; it makes *Societies* Pleasant and Profitable; in fine, it makes all Happy; by taking from the several Orders of Men, that irregular Passion, which is the ground both of Sin and Strife. But as best things, when corrupted, prove the worse, by adding Malignity to their Degeneracy; so the noblest of Designs may be pretended to cover very contrary Intentions: Thus the Doctor, under the specious Pretence of the *Destruction of the Powers of Darkness*, hath plainly endeavoured the *Destruction of the Power of Christian Liberty*; and under the pretence of *Enlarging Christ's Kingdom*, hath shewn his zealous endeavour for the *Enlarging Anti-scriptural Hierarchy*, and *Secular Power*, in the Person of the Priest; not barely to the prejudice of *Christian Knowledge*, but positively against the end and design of the Gospel of Peace, which Jesus Christ is the Author of, and which the Apostles preached: And therefore it cannot be unacceptable to every Contributer, to the Advancement of *Christian Knowledge*, to see the Fallacy of the Pretence detected; by shewing, that instead of that Excellent Design, the bottom is, as the Apostle has it, to *seek their own, and not the things which are Jesus Christ's*.

Phil. 2. 21.

As to the first of these, *viz.* the *Destruction of the Power of Christian Liberty*, the Doctor has plainly shewn his Endeavour and Aim, in these words, 'Now that the *Quakers* are openly, 'and the *Papists* more *covertly*, making their utmost Efforts 'against the *Establishment of our Church*, by false Representations 'at home, of the Numbers and Riches of their Party; and 'by insinuating, that to *Impose* upon them an *established Maintenance* for the Clergy, would be prejudicial to the Interest of 'the Province, by obliging so many wealthy Traders to remove from thence: the Falsity of which, they *(the Clergy)* 'thought me best able to make appear.

Letter, p. 1. *Art.* 3.

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The Apostles, when they *established Churches* in the Faith, they tell us, *They delivered them the Decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the Apostles and Elders which were at* Jerusalem. Acts 16. 4.

These Decrees were few and short; and among them there is no mention of *imposing* a Maintenance: I will recite them. *It seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater Burthen, than these necessary things: That ye abstain from Meats offered to Idols, and from Blood, and from things Strangled, and from Fornication: From which, if you keep your selves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well.* Acts 16. 28, 29.

And if the Doctor had sought the *Establishment of his Church*, by the delivering of these Decrees, and pressing with the greatest Earnestness, the necessity of a *Holy Life*, he might rest himself most firmly assured, that the Quakers never did, nor will ever oppose such an *Apostolick Establishment*: But if the *Establishment of his Church*, must be upon the Ruine of the Temporal Estates of those, who agree not with him in Worship, in removing that Security, which the Priviledges of their first Settlements, and the Sanction of a Law, hath given them: He ought not to take it ill, that we openly oppose that.

As for any *Covert* Opposition, or any Opposition at all made, by Papists, to the Doctor's *Establishment*, I know of none, nor cannot at present find a reason why they should disagree; unless it were upon the Question, Who shall be the *Receivers* of the *Maintenance?* But with this I care not now farther to trouble my self; but shall proceed to shew, that this *Christian Liberty*, which the Doctor would now destroy, was very earlily provided for, by a Law made in that Province, and confirmed by the Government here, and bears date the 6th of *August*, 1650. which Law is entituled, *A Law of* Maryland *for Religion:* In which, among other things, it is said, 'And whereas the inforcing the Conscience, in matters of Religion, 'hath frequently fallen out to be of dangerous Consequence, 'in those *Commonwealths* where it hath been practised; and 'for the more quiet and peaceable Government of this Province, and the better to preserve mutual Love and Unity 'amongst the Inhabitants here: Be it therefore also, by the 'Lord Proprietary, with the Advice and Assent of this Assembly, Ordained and Enacted, except as in this present

'Act

' Act is before declared and ſet forth, that no Perſon or
' Perſons, within this Province, or the Iſlands, Ports, Har-
' bours, Creeks, or Havens, thereunto belonging, profeſſing
' to **believe in Jeſus Chriſt**, ſhall not, from henceforth, be
' any ways troubled, moleſted, or diſcountenanced, for, or
' in reſpect, of his or her Religion, nor in the free Exerciſe
' thereof, within this Province, or the Iſlands thereunto be-
' longing; nor *any way compell'd* to the *Belief* or Exerciſe of
' any other Religion, againſt his or her Conſent. And af-
ter a Clauſe, for the Security of the Civil Government, it goes on, ' And that all, and every Perſon and Perſon, that
' ſhall preſume, contrary to this Act, and the true Intent and
' Meaning thereof, directly or indirectly, either in *Perſon* or
' *Eſtate*, wilfully to Wrong, Diſturb, Trouble or Moleſt, any
' Perſon or Perſons whatſoever, within this Province, pro-
' feſſing to *believe in Jeſus Chriſt*, for or in reſpect of his
' or her Religion, or the free Exerciſe thereof, within this
' Province, otherwiſe than is provided for in this Act,
' that ſuch Perſon or Perſons, ſo offending, ſhall be com-
' pell'd to pay treble Damages to the Party ſo Wronged or
' Moleſted, *&c.*

Whoſoever, that is not ſtrangely bigotted to *Perſecution* and *Impoſing*, muſt, upon reading of this *Law*, agree with the Doctor in his Character of the People of *Maryland*: ' They
Letter p. 2. ' are, ſays he, generally obſerved to be a People of quick
' Parts, and good Intellectuals. I am ſure, to me, this is an Argument that they are ſo. For in this Law, they ſecured a *Scripture Belief*, and preſerv'd a Liberty, which the Apoſtle hints at, when he ſays, *Who art thou that judgeſt another Man's Servant? To his own Maſter he ſtandeth or falleth: Yea, he ſhall be holden up: For God is able to make him ſtand.*
Rom 14. 4.

In this they did very prudently: For hereby all Profeſſors of Chriſtianity ſtood upon the ſame foot of Advantage; none, as Chriſtian, had Power of *Impoſing a Maintenance* from others, each were free to eſtabliſh Churches, and maintain Miniſters (if they would) for themſelves. And if thoſe, who Labour in the Word and Doctrine, Labour in a Goſpel Spirit, and Live according, they need never fear but the People they Labour amongſt will chearfully ſupply their Neceſſities; for which they have the Promiſe of *Jeſus Chriſt*,

if

if they have Faith enough to depend upon it. But to proceed, This *Legal Security*, and some other Previous Advantages, was both Incouragement and Protection for some early Planters, to settle in that Province; among which, with the Doctor's leave, some, not of the Lareſt, nor most Inconsiderable, were *Quakers*; whose Christian Sobriety, and Rational Diligence, has been of no small Advantage to the publick Advantage of that Province, as well as the increasing Revenue of this Crown: The first, their Ingenuous Neighbours will acknowledge; and of the last, there are some Witnesses here, who also are much better Judges than the Doctor, what Prejudice, both to the Revenue of this Crown, and the Good of that Province, their removal would be.

But that I may, if possible, open the Doctor's Eyes in this Question, I will set before them a short Scheme and Estimate of that Violation, which has repeatedly been offered to the Priviledges of the Law before-mentioned, and which has been as often refused to be Confirm'd by the Government here. In order to which, I must first acquaint any Reader, That the *Law of* Maryland, *for Religion*, before-mentioned, did continue to be the Peoples common *Land-mark* of Liberty, from the date of its Confirmation, till *Anno* 1692. at which time some, either not liking their common Freedom of Religion, with the rest of the Inhabitants; or else not willing to Maintain singly their own Chargeable Clergy, did, with the help of the then Governour *Copley*, get an Act, to *impose* upon all others to Maintain them; and was entituled, *An Act for the Service of Almighty God, and Establishment of the Protestant Religion*, &c. This was sent over hither for to be confirmed, but when tender'd to the King and Council for that end, (which was five Years after it was brought over, but was kept Dormant, because that till it was disallowed, it had the Force of a Law, and accordingly they made Distraints by Vertue of it) it was disallowed, as contrary to the *Law of Religion* above cited, and the Repeal sent over. This did not discourage that Party, but that they procur'd another Act, of the same Title, and to the same purpose, and sent it over to be Confirm'd: This also the King in Council disallowed, *Anno* 1699.

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At the time when this Repeal and Diſallowance was ſent over, Doctor *Bray* alſo went, and did ſo effectually beſtir himſelf, that with the Aſſiſtance of the Clergy, *&c.* they, in *Contradiction* to the repeated Diſallowance of the King and Council, to their Law, have again renewed the ſaid Act in Subſtance, and have made the Title yet narrower than the two former: They were for the *Eſtabliſhment of the Proteſtant Religion*; but this is for the *Eſtabliſhment of Religion in this Province, according to the Church of* England. The firſt, it's true, was the moſt Charitable Title, but yet it ſerv'd to the ſame purpoſe, and was expounded as the laſt.

In this Law, among other things (after their former Patterns) it is enacted, 'That for the Incouragement of faithful 'and able Miniſters, labouring in the Work of the Goſpel, to 'come and reſide in this Province, inſtead of ſuch *Tythes* uſually 'in *England*, as aforeſaid, a Tax or Aſſeſſment of 40 *l.* of *To-* 'bacco *per* Poll, be Yearly, and every Year ſucceſſively, levied 'upon every Taxable Perſon, within each reſpective Pariſh, 'within this Province.

By *Taxable Perſons*, is underſtood, all Males of ſixteen Years, and upwards, to ſixty; of white Perſons, and all, both Men and Women, Blacks of the like Ages.

Now for the drawing of the Scheme and Eſtimate, which I promiſed, I ſhall ſuppoſe (for with reſpect to Number, I can do no more, unleſs I had the Aſſiſtance of the Doctor's *Tabula Prima*, &c. of which more anon) that the Heads of Families, who differ in Worſhip from *Epiſcopacy*, their Children and Servants, both White and Black, which are Taxable, may be in Number 6000. (and I think I am not much miſtaken in this Supputation, becauſe the Doctor, in his *Circular Letter* to the Clergy of *Maryland*, at the end of his piece entituled, *Apoſtolick Charity*, printed this Year 1700. hath theſe words, *Eſpecially the Papiſts and Quakers, which I underſtand are numerous amongſt you*; which intimate, there are others who differ from them, though theſe named may be moſt numerous) the Yearly Aſſeſſment of theſe, at 40 *l.* of *Tobacco per* Poll, valuing the Tobacco, *communibus annis*, at a Penny a Pound, (tho' ſome Years ſince 1692. it has been double that Price) it amouts to One Thouſand Pound Sterling a Year: Which is no inconſiderable Sum, to be taken and diſtrained Annually,

for eight Years, as this has been, on pretence for the *Secrets of Almighty God*, by colour of Laws disallowed by Authority.

But as the Assessments above-mentioned, of 40 *l.* of *Tobacco per* Poll, hath been gathered by Laws disallowed, so it is some degree of Injustice, to constrain, even those who owned their Ministry, to give them such a certain Portion; which Assessments being added to the former, will make up, according to the Information I have, a Sum three times the former; the whole Number of Taxable Persons being supposed to be about 24000. by which Computation, 4000 Pounds Sterling a Year, has been taken or distrained, for 8 Years, for the Clergy of that Province. The Total of which Sum is, 32000 Pounds; and the Doctor tells us, there *is but* 16 *Ministers*, and *the Churches but lately built*, and that *to the great Charge of the Governour* Nicholson, *and the Country*.

That it has been to their great Charge, is likely very true, for if each of these 16 Ministers had for the past 8 Years, 100 *l. per Annum*, that will make the Sum of—12800
Then for Building Churches, and petty Expences, if at least it has been so expended——— 19200
Total 32000

Reader, Is not this a notable Burthen to Intail upon a Country, and a ready way to Cramp the Industry of its Inhabitants; and thereby prejudice the Revenue of the Crown?

Now Doctor, as our King is the common Father of his People, and hath carefully executed his distributive Justice, How is it consistent with that, and with the *established Priviledge* of that Province, to seek to draw his Authority to colour the *Violence* of a few, who in their desire, shew themselves more bent on the Spoil of their Neighbours, and the enslaving of the People, than either the *Glory and Service of Almighty God*, or the *common Good of that Province*?

Having shewn briefly, that the Doctor's Design of *Imposing*, is quite contrary to the Settlement of that Province, to the

Will of this Government, as appears in the *Disallowances* before-mentioned, and to the common Good of the People there.

I must bestow a few Lines, to shew the Inconsistency of that Design, of *Imposing*, with the Design of Christianity; and which I cannot better begin, than with the Account of our Saviour, who it is said, *In the last Day, that great Day of the Feast, stood, and cried, saying, If any Man thirst, let him come unto me and drink*: But he did not *Impose* it upon any; and as Himself did not *Impose* upon any, so the Precepts which he gave his Apostles were agreeable; for in great Simplicity and Poverty he sent them forth *(a)* to Preach the Gospel; and does particularly observe to them, that he *(b) sent them forth as Sheep in the midst of Wolves*. But when Men, who pretend to be their Successors, shall by Force *Impose* upon the People to Maintain them, it is proper to read; *They are sent forth as Wolves in the midst of Sheep*; and then, who sent them is no difficult thing to know. But, as our Saviour Jesus Christ did not *Impose* himself upon any, neither his Disciples, so they left no Precept that any of their Followers should; and their Example was of so much force in Primitive Times, that at a Synod held in *Ireland*, about the Years 450, or 456, it was ordained, * 'That neither the Alms of Christians Excommunicated, nor which the Gentiles gave, should be 'received into the Church. And in times acknowledged to be yet Grosser, and more Dark, viz. about the Year 600, they had yet retained so much of true Christianity in practice, if at least we may credit our Historian, *(b)* That *Austine*, and those that came with him, *began* (it had been well if they, and all their Successors, had continued) *to imitate the Apostolick Life of the Primitive Church*. And he particularly mentions their great *Constancy* and Self-denial, shewing forth in their Lives, the excellency of their Doctrine, that they received necessary Food, only from those whom they Taught.

John 7. 37.

(a) Matth. 10. 1. Mar. 6. 7.

(b) Matth. 10. 16.

* *Conciliis*, &c. Hen. Spelman, *tom.* 1. p. 52. Can. 11, 12.

(b) *Beda lib.* 1. *c.* 25.

These few Instances are sufficient to shew the Inconsistency of the Doctor's Pretence to *Apostolick Charity*, with *Imposing* a Maintenance; and that his *Design* of so doing, is contrary to the Gospel of Christ: It was in free Love, and without the expectation or possibility of Reward, that our Saviour hath

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put us into a Capacity of Salvation, and it is *freely* and without expectation of Reward from Man; that his Miniſters are the Meſſengers of that Glad-tidings: And all thoſe whoſe Commiſſions are of the ſame Tenure with the * Apoſtles, on ſuch a *neceſſity* is laid, yea, *Wo* is unto them if they Preach not the Goſpel; they skill not, in ſelling the Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt, no more than *Peter* did. Acts 26. 18. 1 Cor. 9. 16.

Thus far, with reſpect to the Doctor's Deſign; and next, to the other General Head, which I propoſed, *viz. The Method by him propoſed to carry on and effect that* Deſign; which will fall under a two-fold conſideration; 1*ſt*, As it reſpects the People of the Province: 2*dly*, As it reſpects his Clergy there.

And firſt, for the Doctor's Method to *Propagate Chriſtian Knowledge*, as it reſpects the People, which I will give in his own words, 'By the returns given in (ſays he) upon my *Tabula* 'prima Parochialium inquirendorum, by which, when they ſhall 'be all ſent in, I ſhall be inabled to give an account of the 'Names of all Heads of Families, and of the Religion and Mo'rals of every individual Man, Woman and Child, Freeman 'and Slave, White and Black, throughout *Maryland*. *Letter* p. 1. *Par.* 3.

This is, it ſeems, the Doctor's *Method* and *Undertaking*, and a very *remarkable* one it is; but I cannot forbear asking him, Whence the Pattern of this his *Tabula prima?* All the Acts of the Apoſtles has nothing like it; they, Holy Men, were not ſo ſolicitous of the Names and Numbers of the People in a Province, as they were, that thoſe who had given up their Names for to be Followers of Chriſt, might in all things Adorn the Goſpel. They planted the Faith in godly Sincerity, and not in the cunning Craftineſs of Men. It's true, the Doctor may have an occaſion for ſuch a Scrutiny, which the Apoſtles had not; for if he ſhould leave any of their Names out of his Number, it may be the loſs of 40 *l.* of *Tobacco per* Poll; and therefore it is not unlikely, but he will endeavour that his *Tabula* be compleat, as to both their Names and Numbers; but with reſpect to their Morals, it is much if his Tables are not often falſe.

But further, this *Tabula prima Parochialium Inquirendorum*, of the Doctor's, or (to make it once ſpeak Engliſh) *Firſt Table of Pariſh Inquiries*, ſeems to have ſome affinity with the *Inquiſitionem*

sitionem of the Romanists, and to be a Branch of their Anti-christian Politicks, drawn from the * *Decreto Societatis Jesu*, by which to draw the People under his Girdle; and that this is not bare Guess and Surmise only, the Doctor's following words do shew. * Because I find (says he) there comes under my Cognizance, several very important Cases to be tried speedily, with Relation to the Clergy and Laity. To determine several of which, being of so high a Nature, as *Forgery of Holy Orders, Polygamy and Incest*, I want Instructions as to the Manner and Forms of Proceedings; and as it appears to me, have no Power, by my Commission, to give such Sentences as the Nature of the Crimes will require.

* *Writ by Meursius, and printed 1635.*

Upon which, I cannot but tell the Doctor, that whatsoever Person, holding Christian Society, does by wicked and unclean Actions (of which, these are some of the chief) give occasion of Scandal and Offence, to the Society he pretends to hold *Church-Membership* with; that Society hath no farther Power warranted in the New Testament, than to give Admonition, Reproof or Rebuke, upon the Offender; which, if not followed, by the Amendment of the Offender, then to cast out and refuse such an one their Communion. This is all the Process which the Church can make, it being all that our Saviour directed, and what the Apostles did practise.

Now I make no doubt, but the Doctor's Commission was full as extensive as that; but if, through the mistake of the Clerk who drew it, it had been more narrowly worded, yet Holy Writ, without a *Bishop's Commission*, is both sufficient Warrant and Precedent, for all that relates to Church-Membership, and a Separation from it: So that had the Doctor design'd to govern himself in his pretended *Spiritual Function*, and *Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction*, by that *Rule*, he could not want any necessary Instruction, relating to the manner of Proceedings against Sinners of his Communion. But it seems it is something more that he wants, *viz. To give such Sentences as the Nature of Polygamy and Incest do require.* The Doctor does well to tread softly here, and see that his Power be full before he exercise the Office of the Civil Magistrate, and venture to give such Sentences as the Nature of these Crimes require, lest he incur a *Premunire*; for who knows not that these Crimes are in their *Nature* justly deemed Capital, and the *Sentences*, which our

Laws

Laws have provided for them, are according. Here the Doctor's Commiſſion was *ſhort*, he might *Excommunicate*, but not *Hang* the wicked, and it is like it will be no ſhort while before the *Government* put into his hands ſuch a branch of the Civil Power.

What I have yet ſaid, has not been with reſpect to *Forgery of Holy Orders*, which the Doctor ſays, does alſo come under his Cognizance; therefore now a word or two of that, and then I have done with theſe great Crimes of ſome of the Doctor's Communicants. It is nothing ſtrange, that the Doctor ſhould want Inſtruction in this matter, becauſe it is a thing not named in all the New Teſtament; and therefore he can have no light, as to the manner of Proceeding, or Sentence from thence againſt it: The neareſt Parallel which the Doctor can urge from thence, is, where the Apoſtle tells of ſome *that were falſe Apoſtles*; and the mark by which he judged them to be ſo, was, they were *Deceitful workers*: Now if the Doctor will make this the *Line* and *Rule* of his Judgment, it is too likely he will find no ſmall part of his few Clergy there to be guilty. 2 Cor. 11. 13.

But now, the *deceitful Works*, by which *falſe Apoſtles* were known, cou'd not be the *forging of any Writing or Warrant* under the Hand and Seal of a Biſhop, to Uſe and Practiſe as a Miniſter in the Church of Chriſt: Becauſe we read not, that any of the Miniſters of Chriſt had any ſuch thing; ſo much the contrary, that one of the moſt Eminent ſays, *I neither received it of Man, neither was I taught it, but by the Revelation of Jeſus Chriſt.* This was *Holy Orders*, properly and truly ſpeaking. And I deny the Doctor to prove by any Warrant or Authority from Chriſt or his Apoſtles, that That manner of *Ordination* and *Miſſion* is now ceaſed; and that it is now meerly Humane and Political, according to the general Practiſe of Chriſtendom. This brings me to the 2*d* Conſideration of the Doctor's Method, as it reſpects his Clergy there: In the Choice of which, that are now to be ſent over, the Doctor ſeems to be very careful, when he ſays, *He would have them to be of a true publick diſintereſted, in one word, of a miſſionary Spirit.* Theſe will indeed be excellent Qualifications; becauſe the Man who is truly of a *Miſſionary Spirit*, will find like preſſing neceſſity to Preach the Goſpel, Gal. 1. 12. *Letter* p. 2. *Par.* 6.

Gospel, as the Apostle says he had. And if the Doctor will take only such, instead of Thirty, which he says he shall at least want, I wou'd be glad, with my whole Heart, if the number were much increased; nor wou'd the People be in any danger from them, because such would in Truth and Sincerity say, *We seek not yours, but you:* And therein give full proof, that they were both *publick Spirited*, and *Disinterested* to worldly Things.

1 Cor. 9. 16.

But alas, the Provision which the Doctor has so carefully began to make, of *Glebes* and *Parsonage-Houses*, and *Yearly Assessments* for *Tithes*, are plain Indications to the contrary of his pretence of *Disinterestedness*, and speak this no less loudly, than *the Bleating of the Sheep, and the Lowing of the Oxen*, did *Saul*'s Disobedience.

1 Sam. 15. 14.

That this may appear yet a little plainer, if possible, I shall observe, that the Doctor, in his *General view of the English Colonies* (which is at the beginning of his Piece, *Apostolick Charity, &c.* printed this Year 1700.) says, There are 16 Ministers in *Maryland*; and in his Letter, as above-quoted, he says, He shall want at least Thirty, so that these will make Forty Six in Number, which will be a pretty chargeable Company to the Province, by that time they are furnish'd to the Doctor's Mind; for he says, 'Fifty Pounds 'worth of Books being the **least** that can be supposed re- 'quisite to enable a Minister to discharge the Duties of his 'Function. Here the Doctor has taken a Method to spend Two Thousand Three Hundred Pounds, of the Peoples Money, only to help qualifie the Priests: Is not that very hard upon the People? Who must be obliged to lay out their Money to Teach the Priest *gratis*? Yet, when he has learn'd, he will not Teach the People *gratis*, but make them pay for what he takes out of Books which they gave him. If the Doctor can reconcile this to the practise of the Primitive Preachers, recorded in the New Testament, then we may say, He has turn'd over them leaves to some purpose. But not to insist long on this, I will shew how the Doctor does further explain himself in his *Proposals for the Encouragement and Promoting of Religion*, &c. printed in his *Apostolick Charity*, before-quoted; 'The Clergy (says he) that are already in the Plantations,

Apost. Cha. p. 7.

Plantations, as well as those who are to be sent thither, cannot (Humanely Speaking) be so capable of Informing themselves, and of Instructing others, in the Design of Christianity, in the Nature of the Covenant of Grace, in the Meanings and Importance of the Articles of our most Holy Faith, and in the Nature and Extent of all Christian Duties, without the assistance of some good Commentators upon the Holy Scripture.

I must not omit here, to observe to the Doctor, that if the Clergy which are already in the Plantations, and those who are to be sent thither, are truly of a *Missionary Spirit, having a Zeal for God's Glory, and the Salvation of Mens Souls*, it is impossible they should be Ignorant of any Essential Part of the Christian Religion: And therefore, if they recur to *Humane Means*, to make themselves *Gospel-Ministers*, they will yet want a *Gospel Spirit*; and then wonder not, if they succeed not in bringing Souls to God: For the turning People from *Darkness to Light, and from the Power of Satan to the Power of God*, is only to be done by such, who have first known something of the Power of God, to turn them from Satan's Power, by which these are both *Ministers* and *Witnesses* of those things, in which the Power of Christ hath appeared; and these will more effectually know *the Design of Christianity, in the Nature of the Covenant of Grace*, as it hath wrought in them, than any Commentator whatsoever can teach them. But since the Doctor does place so eminent a part of his Clergy's Qualifications, in their Acquaintance with good *Commentators*, it may not be amiss a little to examine the Pretence, and which might have been done with more certainty, had the Doctor named those *good Commentators* he intends; but it will, however, be no very difficult matter to judge, which may be some that are ranked in that Number: For when Persons are distinguished by the Epithets of *Fathers* and *Holy*, there can be no doubt, but these, if they have writ Commentaries, they obtain the first place; and of such there are very many: Yet that I may not tire my Reader, with too great Variety of them, I will choose to Instance, particularly, *Hieron*, of whom it is said, *He was the greatest Critick of them all; and who, by often exercising the Strength*

Daille's *Use of the Fathers, lib.* 1. p. 112.

Strength of his admirable Wit, both by himself, and with others, hath observed more, touching the Stile, Method, natural Disposition and Opinions of the Fathers, than any other.

This Man, in an Apology which he writ, saith, 'This is 'the usual manner of Commentaries, and the Rule that 'Commentators go by; to set down in their Expositions, 'the several Opinions they have met withal; and to deliver 'both what their own, and what the Judgment of others is 'upon the place. And this is the Practice, not only of In-'terpreters of the Scriptures, but of the Expositors also, of 'all kind of Secular Learning, as well in the Greek, as in the 'Latin Tongue.

Apol. adverſ. Ruff. Daile *lib.* 1. p. 101.

Now Doctor, with what certainty, *Humanely Speaking*, can any of thy Clergy learn, from such an undistinguished Mixture of Opinions, the *Design of Christianity in the Nature of the Covenant of Grace*? But to carry the difficulty, or rather impossibility, to its proper length, let us hear the same *Hierom*, in an Epistle which he writ, where, after having named the Writings of *Origen*, *Didymus*, *Apollinaris*, *Theodorus*, *Heraclas*, *Eusebius Emissenus*, *Alexander* the Heretick, with others; he says, 'That I may therefore plainly tell the Truth, I confess, 'that I have read all these Authors, and collecting together 'as much as I could in my Memory, I presently called for 'a Scribe, to whom I dictated either my own Conceptions, 'or those of other Men, without remembring either the Or-'der, or the Words sometimes, or the Sense.

Hierom ep. *ad* Auguſt. *quæ eſt* 89. Daile *lib.* 1. p. 104, 105.

See here what great Uncertainty the Man is brought into, who seeks to them for Information in the *Design of Christianity*; while he is reading, as he thinks, *Hierom*, or others of the Fathers (as they are called) it may not be the Opinion of the Man, under whose it is found; and how should the Reader know this, unless he takes the Advice which *Hierom* gives to *Augustine*? Saying, 'If therefore thou lightedest upon 'any thing in my Exposition, which was worthy of Repre-'hension, it would have stood better with thy Learning, to 'have consulted the Greek Authors themselves, and to have 'seen whether what I have written be to be found in them, 'or not; and if not, then to have condemned it as my own 'private Opinion. See Doctor, where Commentaries lead; for,

for, according to this Advice, each of the Clergy Men ought to have all the Greek Authors; and possibly, according to another Man's Advice, they ought to have all the Latine's; by which time the Libraries for thy 46 Clergy-men will cost near half so many Thousand Pounds: And after all the Expense, are not such Comments excellent means to Teach the Clergy, that are to Teach the People? And yet such is the Assistance that is to be expected from them; for if some others have not spoke out so much, they have done no less; witness *Hilary*, *Ambrose*, and others, who Robbing poor *Origen* without any Mercy, do not yet do him the Honour, so much as to name him scarcely. Daille's *Use of the Fathers, lib.* 1. p. 104.

What I have said, does only respect their *Manner* of writing Commentaries; for as to the *Matter* of them, it falls under a distinct Consideration, wherein, in very great variety of Instances it might be shewn, that their Opinions are as odd and extravagant, as the manner of Collecting them was precarious, which I desire not now to trouble my Reader with.

What I have said, as to the manner of Writing *Commentaries*, may serve to shew, that, *Humanely Speaking*, they are not proper Assistances to Teach a Man, *the Design of Christianity, in the Nature of the Covenant of Grace.* But indeed, why should any Man go to look for that in Commentaries, which he may much more plainly, and with infinite more certainty, find in Holy Writ, if he bring with him but a fitting Disposition to receive Information, I mean, Sincerity and Humility. Christian Religion, is a plain Religion, its *Design* is the Salvation of Men; and there being very many, whose Capacities and Understandings are not fitted to apprehend nice Subtilties, whose Souls are still in the same Capacity of Salvation with the Wisest: God, in his Justice, has not withheld, even from these, a possibility of knowing certainly their Duty, and sufficient Assistance, whereby they may be enabled to do it; *For the Grace of God has appeared unto all Men*, to teach them both their negative and positive Duty, what to leave undone, and what to do; and why any should refuse this, and depend on them who pore upon *Commentaries*, and neglect this certain Teacher, I see not a Reason.

I have now done with the Doctor's *Method* of propagating *Christian Knowledge*, for the present, and come to an Assertion of his; 'At *Philadelphia* in *Pensilvania*, the Congre-
Letter p. 3. Par. Last. 'gation of Church People, which amounted but to Twen-
'ty or Thirty, at most, not two Years ago, through the
'Blessing of God, upon the endeavours of a late *Mission-*
'*ary*, is now increased, chiefly from Quaker-Converts, to
'upwards of Seven Hundred.

The Doctor was either foully imposed upon, or did willingly mistake the State of the Communicants of his Church in *Pensilvania*, when he ventured to assert as above; and I do tell him, that if his *Tables of Parish Inquiries* are made with no greater exactness, they will not be fit to be depended upon: For he is very much out both in the Relation he has given of what the Number of them was, and is; but to me that is not material; for if they were many-fold what he says they are, I should by no means be offended, while they were good *Christians*, walking answerable to that Holy Profession: But when he Insults and says, That they are now upwards of Seven Hundred, chiefly from Quaker-Converts: I must put him to rights so far, as to tell him, That there is not *Twenty Quaker-Converts* among them; and even of them, I suppose, he will neither care to give the World a true Account of their Names nor Morals.

I shall now come to the Conclusion, and take leave of the Doctor for this time, when I have taken a little notice of his Liberality, in bestowing upon *G. K.* the Epithet, *Excellent*, and the occasion of it, when he says, *The Feild is there, and the neighbouring Parts, so happily Sown by the Excellent Mr.* Keith.

And first, for the occasion of it, *viz.* The *Field's* being *Sown* by him: Prithee Doctor, What is the Seed, *Tares* or *Wheat*? I am inform'd it is not, nay, I am sure it cannot be the last, if at least he hath Sown the same, he is Sowing up and down this Kingdom, since his being denied by us, such as Uncharitableness, Strife, Contention, Division, and the like; from the Sowing whereof, there can Spring no good Crop: Nor will he prove more than a weak and short Support to them that depend upon him.

But

But ſince the Doctor ſeems to be a Stranger to all this, and therein unacquainted with the true Character of his *Excellent Mr.* Keith, I will preſent him with his ſhort Deſcription, in the following Abſtract.

G. K. is a Man of an unſtable Mind, neither conſiſtent long with himſelf, nor agreeing with others; by which natural Diſpoſition, and the help of his Eleemoſynary Learning, he accuſtoms his Pen to Scribbling; in which he Perverts Mens Words, Miſrepreſents their Principles, and then draws falſe and odious Conſequences from them; and charges them on thoſe, whoſe Principles, fairly ſtated, do not admit of ſuch undue Concluſions. He hath traduced both the Living and the Dead, and by what he writes, he hath ſhewn, that to gratifie his Revenge, he regards not what he ſays, nor what he writes, if he can but expoſe them to Contempt and Reproach, with whom he is Angry. He is one of the greateſt Inſtances of Inconſtancy, Contradiction and Cenſoriouſneſs, which this Age has produced. In a word, He is the Compound of Abuſe and Slander; He is at preſent an Itinerant Preacher, but gaping after ſomething better than that Fatigue; which advance, if he miſs of, *Caveat Hierarchia.*

Doctor, This is thy Excellent Mr. *Keith*, in whom, it ſeems, thou art not leſs miſtaken, than in the foregoing parts of thy Letter; all which may'ſt thou amend in thy next, by endeavouring to propagate *Chriſtian Knowledge*, in a Chriſtian Spirit, and by Chriſtian Means,

Is the Deſire of thy Faithful Friend,

Joſeph Wyeth.

FINIS.

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